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LES TROPHÉES

JOSÉ-MARIA DE HEREDIA

THE SONNETS

Translated by

HENRY JOHNSON

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
Yale University Press
1910

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José-Maria de Heredia, one of the most eminent recent poets, a member of the French Academy, was born November 22, 1842 in Cuba, at Fortuna-Cafeyere near the City of Santiago. His family traces a direct descent from one of the early Spanish discoverers of America. He was still a youth when he went to France, where he was to receive his education, first, at the Collège de St. Vincent in Senlis. He then passed a year at the University of Havana, and returning to France followed the professional training of an archivist in the École des Chartes in Paris. The success of these studies was proved by a scholarly translation, with notes, of the Spanish discoverer, Bernal Diaz del Castillo's History of the Conquest of New Spain. This work was published in four volumes in 1878-1887. His scrupulous care and brilliant prose style appeared also in another translation from the Spanish, of a brief narrative, La Nonne Alfarez, made public in 1894.

As a poet Heredia was not known to the great public prior to the issue in 1892, in his fiftieth year, of Les Trophées, a volume of sonnets together with

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other poems of a descriptive nature. Like many an artist of long-trained technical power, to whose skill the expressed approval or disapproval of the untrained public could make no addition, and whose springs of ambition flowed in their own fulness within himself, Heredia never courted a wide fame, but wrote and published at long intervals, in the Revue des Deux Mondes and elsewhere, poetry which a few had understood and duly prized.

His literary affiliation is chiefly with the poet Leconte de Lisle, of whom he was an ardent disciple, and to whom, on pages following a most affectionate dedication of Les Trophées to his deceased mother, he addressed a preliminary epistle. Heredia's indebtedness to his master is for exemplification of the principles of the poetic art seriously conceived, and for insistence on the best literary workmanship, founded on exacting standards. His own powerful originality appeared in the wide range of subjects, and their thoroughly modern, almost erudite treatment; and even more prominently, in a rich, pictorial style, handled with distinguished clarity and firmness.

His election to membership in the French Academy in 1894 followed the publication of Les Trophées. His selection as the official poet to honor the Emperor Alexander III of Russia, and

his appointment in 1901 as Administrator of the Library of the Arsenal, next to the National Library the most important in France, have given wider public knowledge of the Academician and professional archivist; but Heredia's great gift to literature remains his noblest title to fame. His death occurred in October, 1905.

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GREECE
AND
SICILY

OBLIVION.

A RUINED temple crowns the headland's height;
Here Death has mingled marble Goddesses
And bronzen Heroes in one tawny earth,
'Neath the lone sod their glory burying:
Only the herdsman with his buffaloes,
His dark form reared against the boundless blue,
Sometimes breathes from his conch an ancient strain
That fills this quiet air far o'er the sea.
A gentle mother to the Gods of old,
The Earth will bind the capitals each spring
With fresh acanthus, vainly eloquent;
But Man, indifferent to the fathers' dreams,
Hears without shuddering, in the deep, calm night,
The Sea bemoan in tears her Sirens lost.

HERCULES
AND
THE CENTAURS

NEMEA.

SINCE the Subduer went within the wood,
Following the awful footprints on the soil,
A single roar betokened their embrace,
Then silence; and the sinking sun was set.
By fallow, briar and thicket fleeing on
Toward Tiryns the affrighted shepherd runs,
And, turning, sees with eyes strained wide in fear
The great wild beast rise at the forest's edge.
He shouts; he sees against the bloody sky
Nemea's terror show his armed jaws,
His flying mane and his ill-boding fangs,
Where larger in the deepening twilight stands
Great Hercules wearing the horrid skin,
A monstrous hero, mingled man and beast.

As down the muddy slope the Hero passed,
The birds by thousands rose up everywhere
And flew before him like a gust of wind
Out o'er the lake, whose mournful waters tossed;
Others with lower flight in netted lines
Brushed nigh the brow that Omphale had kissed;
Then, fitting the proud arrow to the string,
Superb the Archer stepped forth in the reeds.
And down from the affrighted cloud, shot through,
There fell with strident cries a direful rain,
Which murderous flashes streaked with lines of fire.
At length the sun looked down athwart the clouds
His flashing arrows pierced, on Hercules
All bloody, smiling at the great, blue sky.

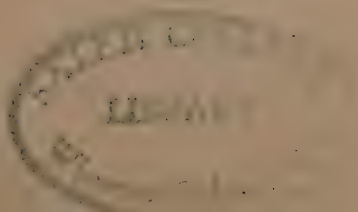
NESSUS.

When I with brothers lived as one of them
And like them knew no better fate nor worse,
Thessalian mountains were my boundless realm,
Their icy torrents laved my ruddy coat.
In sunlight grew I, shapely, happy, free;
Only at times, in air my nostrils sniffed,
Would come the warm scent of Epirot mares
And make me restless, as I ran, or slept.
But since I saw the spouse in triumph smile
In the Stymphalian bowman's arms, my mane
Will bristle in my harrowing desire,
Because some god, accursed be his name!
Has mingled in the hot blood of my loins
A stallion's fire with love which sways a man.

Till now through wood, by rock and stream, through dale
Strayed the proud troop of Centaurs numberless;
Upon their flanks sunlight and shadow played,
Their dark manes streaming o'er our flaxen coats.
In vain bloom summer meads; we tread them now
Alone; the cave deserted, clogged with brush.
Betimes I fall to shuddering in the warm,
Dark night to hear the distant stallions' call.
For day by day is growing less the race
Of the prodigious, cloud-engendered sons;
They leave our love for woman's, madly sought.
Their love for us debases us to brutes,
And wrests from us the neighing of the mare,
For they desire in us the beast alone.

CENTAURS AND LAPITHAE.

The wedding guests rushed headlong to the feast,
Centaurs and warriors, drunken, bold and grand,
And flesh of heroes in the torches' glare
Shone 'mid the glowing coats of cloud-born sons.
Laughter and shouts!—A cry!—The Spouse defiled
In tattered purple wards the black breast off;
The brazen trumpet calls to the shock of hoofs
Amid wild clamor by the broken board.
Then he by whom the tallest is a dwarf
Stands up. Above him glares the lion's head,
Bristling with yellow hair. 'Tis Hercules.
At once through that vast hall from end to end,
Quelled by those dreaded eyes of blazing wrath,
The monstrous troop, snorting with rage, recoils.



FLIGHT OF CENTAURS.

With murder and rebellion wild, they flee
To safe retreat among the craggy hills;
Fright drives them headlong, for they feel Death near,
And on the night air sniff the lion's scent.
Trampling the lizard and the snake, they cross
Ravines and torrents, thickets, unrestrained;
And now they see lift up their crests afar
Ossa, Olympus and dark Pelion.
Betimes one of the affrighted rout will rear
To turn and look; then with a single bound
Will join again his brothers of the herd;
For he with agonized distress has seen
The dazzling full moon stretch behind them long
The shadow of the awful Hercules.

THE BIRTH OF APHRODITE.

BEFORE all things Chaos enwrapped the worlds,
Where rolled unmeasured Time and Space, until
Great Gaia, favoring her Titans, bared
Her mighty bosom with its fruitful breasts.
They fell; they sank below the Stygian waves;
Nor yet beneath the storm-rent skies had Spring
Let forth the bursting splendors of the Sun,
Nor generous Summer ripened yellow fields.
Fierce, ignorant of laughter and of games,
The Immortals throned upon Olympus' snows:
But heaven caused the virile dew to fall,
The Ocean parted; from the flame-lit foam
Emerging nude in godlike radiance,
Bloomed Aphrodite in Uranus' blood.

JASON AND MEDEA.

To Gustave Moreau.

In an enchanted stillness, 'neath the leaves
Of that great forest, home of old alarms,
A wondrous dawn was quickening with its tears
A strange, rich flowering about them there:
A poisonous perfume loads the magic air,
In which her breath had sown the potent charms.
The Hero followed; on his armor shone
The quivering lightnings of the famous Fleece.
Lighting the wood as if with precious stones,
Great birds flew by beneath the flowery vault,
While heaven's azure bent o'er silvery lakes.
Love smiled upon them; but the fateful spouse
Bore with her still her furious jealousy,
Her Asian draughts, her father, and her Gods.

THE THERMODON.

All day had blazing Themiscyra known
The clamor and the shock of cavalry,
And in its dark, slow flood Thermodon rolled
Corpses and arms, and chariots of death.
Where are the armed maidens who led on
Their royal squadrons to the butchery,
Hippolyta, Asteria aglow?
Their pallid bodies lie disheveled, dead.
Such flowering giant lilies were mown down;
Both banks were strown with warlike riders slain,
With here and there a neighing, struggling steed.
The Euxine saw at dawn on far-off slopes,
Beyond that stream ensanguined to the sea,
White stallions fleeing, stained with the Virgins' blood.

ARTEMIS
AND
THE NYMPHS

ARTEMIS.

O Huntress, now thy quivering nostrils fill
With forest odors, pungent, everywhere;
And in thy maiden, man-like energy,
With hair thrown backward, now thou wilt be gone.
By thee all day Ortygia resounds
With roaring of hoarse-throated leopards, while
Thou boundest through the panting orgy's midst,
The red sod strown with great dogs, disentrailed.
But, Goddess, keener still thy joy to feel
The piercing thorn, the stab of tooth or claw
In flesh avenged already by thy spear;
For thy heart means to taste the cruel sweet
Of mingling deathless purple in thy sports
With the black and horrid blood of monsters slain.

THE CHASE.

Four swift, white steeds have drawn the car of day
To heaven's height, while 'neath their burning breat
The checkered golden plains lie tremulous;
Earth feels upon her sides the flaming heat.
The forest spreads its scarcely moving leaves
In vain; down through the swaying tops, through shade
Where silvery notes of laughing fountains ring,
The sunbeam darts and sparkles playfully.
'Tis that hot hour when, by the thorns, through groves,
Now bounding with her mighty dogs, superb,
Hallos of death, and blood, and baying throats,
Speeding the arrows from the tense-drawn cord,
With streaming hair, wild, breathless, unrestrained,
Great Artemis sends terror through the woods.

NYMPHAEVM.

DOWNWARD the heavenly quadriga glides,
And, as he views the western sands beneath,
In vain the God holds back with fourfold rein
His steeds, that rear in the incandescent gold,
And plunge. The sea, mightily sighing, fills
The sounding sky, where purple lingers yet;
And from the blue deep of calm night shines down
The silent Crescent, robed in silvery light.
The Nymphs beside the cold spring's bank cast down
Their unstrung bows and quivers arrowless;
And all is still, save where a stag bells, far.
The cool moonlight rests on their nightly dance,
While Pan, with slower or with quickened rhythm,
Laughs out to hear his breath lend life to reeds.

PAN.

On through the thickets, by the secret paths
Which disappear down avenues of green,
The goat-foot God, hunter of unclad Nymphs,
Glides 'neath the high trees with his eyes on fire.
'Tis sweet to listen to the low, cool sounds,
That rise from unseen springs when noon's great sun,
The dazzling conqueror of the clouds, sends forth
Into the moving night his shafts of gold.
A Nymph has lost her way, and, listening, stops
Where morning's tears fall dropping on the moss;
Her young heart fills as with a drunkenness:
But with one bound from the black thicket leaps
The God; he grasps her, and laughs loud in glee,
And disappears. Again the woods are still.

THE BATH OF THE NYMPHS.

THERE is a wild glen by the Euxine Sea;
Above its spring bends down a laurel black;
One laughing Nymph clings to the branch, and dips
A timid foot into the chilly pool;
And all, with one leap when they hear the shell,
Plunge in the splashing water their white flesh;
And from its bubbles rises now a hip,
Bright locks, a torso, or a rosy breast.
A godlike merriment fills the dull woods,
When suddenly two eyes glow in the shade;
The Satyr's horrid laughter checks their sports;
They dart away. So let one evil crow
But caw, and all Caÿster's swans will rise
In desperate, snowy flight far from the stream.

THE VASE.

How fine the hand that carved this ivory!
See! here is Jason and the Colchian woods,
Medea with great, magic eyes, and there
Over a stele hangs the sparkling Fleece:
Near them reclines the Nile, immortal source
Of rivers; there, wild with sweet poison quaffed,
The Bacchants wind the full-leaved vines about
The yoke, which bound the bulls those men release.
Beneath are horsemen in a clamorous fray;
Then heroes coming home upon their shields,
Old men lamenting, mothers shedding tears;
And last, for handles, see them curve their backs
And press their firm, white breasts against each brim,
The two Chimaeras, drinking from the vase!

ARIADNE.

To the bronze cymbal's clear and ringing clash
The Queen, unclad, on a great tiger's back
Watches Iacchus come across the strand
With all the thronging Orgy in his train.
The royal beast yields his broad back to bear
His dear-loved burden o'er the yellow sands;
And, as her fondling hand lets fall the rein,
For love he roars, and bites his bridle's flowers.
Her hair across his arching flank rolls down
Its clustered amber 'mid the black of grapes;
But she, the Spouse, hears not the low, deep roar,
For her wild lips, ambrosia-sated now,
Their long appeals to faithless love forgot,
Smile for the kiss of Asia's conqueror!

BACCHANAL ROUT.

The Ganges hears with terror the quick cries,
For from their broken yokes the tigers spring,
Mewing, and underneath their great, wild leaps
The Bacchants crush the vintage in their flight.
The dark grapes of the vine, which claws and teeth
Have crushed, have reddened all their throats and flanks,
While by their striped sides white bellies gleam
Of leopards, rolling in the purple mire.
Above the shuddering bodies the dazed beasts,
With growlings that hoarse rattling throats prolong,
Scent redder blood beneath the golden tan;
The god, as drunken with unheard-of joys,
With cries and wand excites the maddened throng
Of females howling and of roaring males.

A GOD'S AWAKING.

With hair disheveled and with bruised throats,
With tears that irritate their frenzied sense,
The Byblian women, wailing, lead the slow,
Funereal line; for on the bed, thick-strown
With flowering anemones, there lay,
Perfumed with burning incense and sweet herbs,
—For Death had closed the languorous, long eyes—
The youth adored by all the Syrian maids.
And so the troop of women mourn till dawn,
When, see! he wakens at Astarte's call,
Her mystic spouse, besprayed with dewy myrrh:
Alive once more, the ancient now a youth!
The sky seems but a single, open rose,
Dyed with a heavenly Adonis' blood.

THE SORCERESS.

YES, everywhere, e'en at the altar's foot,
I see her call me, opening her white arms.
O venerable Father! Mother, who
Didst bear me, is our race then so accursed?
Never Eumolpid priest, avenging, shook
His bloody robes toward us in Samothrace;
Yet I, with weary heart and lagging foot,
Flee, hearing on my track the sacred dogs.
Hating myself, I breathe in everywhere
The black enchantments and ill-omened charms,
In which the wrathful Gods enwrap me still;
For the great Gods have made resistless arms
Those lips which make me reel, and those sad eyes,
Her kisses and her tears to be my death.

THE SPHINX.

WHERE on Cithæron's side the rock is cleft,
The brambles hide a den, and in the midst
The maid of eagle wings and unbowed will
Sits with resplendent eyes and throat and breast.
Upon her threshold he has stopped, amazed;
"What shadow lends my cave still deeper gloom?"
"'Tis Love!" "The God?" "The Hero!" "Enter! but
Thou seekest Death. Dar'st thou attack Him?" "Yes!
Bellerophon smote the Chimæra through."
"No nearer!" "But my lips have made thine move!"
"Come then, and in my arms be thy bones crushed,
My nails deep in thy flesh—" "What's torture, if
The fame be mine, and mine the longed-for kiss?"
"In vain thy glory; thou shalt die!"—"O joy!"

MARSYAS.

The natal wood thy breath was wont to charm
Gave not its pines to burn thee, wretched one!
Thy bones met dissolution, and thy blood
Flowed in the Phrygian streams down to the plain.
The jealous god, the pride of heaven, struck
His cithar's iron plectrum through thy reeds,
Which tamed the lions, taught the birds to sing;
And of Celænæ's player naught remains
Save blood-stained skin which flutters from the yew,
To which they bound him whom they flayed alive.
O cruel god! What cries! Sad, tender voice!
Men hear no more 'neath fingers all too skilled
His flute go sighing by Meander's banks;
His skin is but the plaything of the wind.

PERSEUS
AND
ANDROMEDA

ANDROMEDA AND THE MONSTER.

The virgin child of Cepheus, still alive,
Disheveled, bound to the black island rock,
Laments with futile sobbing as she writhes
Her queenly body, quivering with dread.
The ocean, monster-like beneath the storm,
Casts at her icy feet its acrid froth,
And everywhere through her closed lids she sees
The sea-green jaws gape, moving, numberless.
Like thunder-clap from out a cloudless sky
A sudden neighing comes resounding, clear:
Dread fills her opened eyes, then ecstasy;
She sees in dizzy, sure-winged flight the son
Of Zeus come borne on rearing Pegasus,
Who spreads his great blue shadow o'er the sea.

PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA.

AMID the foam the rider checks his flight;
Medusa's slayer slays this monster now.
Dripping with horrid slaver stained with blood,
His arms bear off the virgin, golden-haired.
The steed divine, Chrysaor's brother, paws
The sea, and neighs, and fain would not obey.
He lifts the loved one to him, wild, confused,
Who laughs, and clasps him to her as she sobs.
His arms enfold her. Great waves hide them all;
She gently raises to the steed's wide back
Her fair feet, which a straying wave had kissed;
Then Pegasus, vexed by the water's lash,
Obeys the Hero, rises with one bound,
And beats the dazzled air with wings of flame.

ANDROMEDA BORNE AWAY.

In silent flight the mighty winged horse
From wider nostrils jets his steaming breath;
His feathers quiver as he bears them on
Athwart the blue night of that starlit sky.
First Africa sinks 'neath that beaten gulf;
Then Asia,— sands,— then mist-girt Lebanon,—
And now appears, all white with foam, the sea,
In whose enshrouding waters Helle sank.
As two wide-spreading sails the wind expands
His wings, which 'neath new stars encradle warm
The lovers, locked within each other's arms,
Gazing on skies in which their shadows throb,
Where, 'twixt the Water-bearer and the Ram,
Their Constellations rise from depths of blue.

EPIGRAMS
AND
BUCOLICS

THE GOATHERD.

Follow not, goatherd, up this rough ravine,
The wilful leaping of the wild he-goat;
The slopes of Menalus, our exile home,
The darkness mounts too fast; thy hope is vain.
Shall we stay here?—I have both figs and wine—
And in this shelter wild await the dawn?
Speak softly, though; the gods are everywhere,
O Mnasyle; and Hecate looks down.
In shadow yonder is the Satyr's cave,
The shy, familiar spirit of these heights.
If we affright him not, he may come forth.
Hear'st thou the shepherd's pipe sing at his lips?
'Tis he! His two horns catch the rays! See there
My goats dance for him in the clear moonlight!

COME. Yonder path leads to Cyllene's dells.
Here is the cave, the spring; and there he loves
To sleep upon the bed of grass and thyme,
Beneath the great pine's shade, which, singing, breathes.
Tie to this mossy trunk thy full-fed sheep.
Know'st thou, that ere another month for him
Besides her lamb she will have cheese and milk?
And Nymphs will weave a mantle from her wool.
Be favorable, goat-foot Pan, and guard
The flocks that feed in Arcady, I pray!
He hears! I see the tree go quivering!
Come, then. The sun dips to the radiant west.
A marble altar and a poor man's gift
Are both the same, if pure hearts offer them.

VOTIVE EPIGRAM.

To Ares, the severe! To warlike Strife!
Help me, for I am old, to hang upon
This pillar my hacked swords, my heavy shield,
This broken casque with drooping, bloody crest;
This bow, — but, tell me, should I twist the cord
Around this wood, — hard medlar, that no man
But me has ever bent, — or if my arm,
Which trembles now, should once more string the bow?
The quiver, too; thine eye appears to seek
The archer's weapons in the leathern sheath,
The arrows that the winds of battle speed.
'Tis empty. Think'st thou I have lost the shafts?
Nay, thou mayst find them all at Marathon;
'Twas there they stayed, stuck fast in Persian throats.

FUNERARY EPIGRAM.

HERE buried, Stranger, lies a locust green,
Whose food, two seasons through, young Helle brought,
Whose wing, made vibrant by the sharp-notched leg,
Would sound in bush or pine or cytisus.
Silent, alas! is she, once nature's lyre,
Muse of the fields, the furrows, and the grain.
For fear her gentle slumber be disturbed,
Pass quickly, friend; let no weight press on her.
See yonder, white among the tufted thyme,
Her funeral stone just set. How many men
Have missed this supreme mark of destiny!
It was a child's tears that first wet her tomb;
And every morning comes the loving dawn
And makes libation of her dewdrops here.

THE SHIPWRECKED.

WITH wind astern and under cloudless skies
He saw the Pharian light receding fast;
Arcturus rose as he left Egypt, proud
Of his swift ship with strengthened sides of bronze,
No more to see the Alexandrian mole.
In sands so waste no goat could find its food
The storm has hollowed his sad resting-place;
The sea-wind wrenches there a lonely shrub.
Beneath the deepest fold of shifting dune,
In night without a moon or star or dawn,
May the brave sailor find repose at last!
O Land, O Sea, pity his shade distressed!
On this Hellenic shore where his bones lie,
Be light above him, thou, and thou, be still!

THE PRAYER OF THE DEAD.

STAY, listen, traveler! If e'er thy steps
Bear thee to Cypsela and Hebrus' banks,
Bid aged Hyllos duly mourn for me,
His son, whom he shall never see again.
My murdered body was the food of wolves,
And what remains lies in this dense, drear wood;
My grieving, tearful Shade roams the dark ways
Of Erebus. No man avenges me.
Go, then. If at the hour of waning day
Thou e'er shouldst meet at foot of mound or grave
A woman whose white brow is veiled in black,
Draw near; fear neither night nor charms; it is
My mother, Stranger, by a useless tomb,
Clasping an empty urn, wet with her tears.

THE SLAVE.

UNCLOTHED, unclean, frightful, and meanly fed,
A slave,—my body bears the marks of it—
I was born free where sweep the fair, curved shores,
And honeyed Hybla's hills of blue look down,
I left the happy isle, alas! If thou,
In springtime following the flight of swans,
Shalt see the Syracusan bees and vines,
Dear guest, then search out her whom I have loved.
Her eyes of shaded violet, so pure
Beneath the conquering arches of those brows,
Shall I see smile to heaven, reflected there?
In pity go where Clearista dwells;
Tell her I live to see her once again.
Thine eyes shall know her, for she's ever sad.

THE HUSBANDMAN.

Seed-basket, plough, yoke, shares worn bright,
Harrow and goad, and sharpened scythe that mowed
In one day grain to fill a threshing-floor,
Pitchfork that passed the sheaves to the laborers, —
These homely tools, too heavy for him now,
Old Parmis vows to Rhea the divine,
Who wakes the seed laid in the sacred earth;
His work is over with his eighty years.
He still is poor, though nigh a century
Beneath the sun his coulter cleaves the sod;
Joyless his life, old age without remorse;
And weary for his labor with the clods,
He wonders if perhaps in Erebus
The dark fields of the dead must too be ploughed.

TO HERMES CRIOPHOROS.

That the companion of the Naiads please
To make the ewe attractive to the ram,
And by him deign to multiply the flocks
That wander, nibbling, by Galaesus' banks,
Let him at ease be welcomed festively
Beneath the friendly shepherd's roof of reeds;
The genial Spirit loves the sacrifice
On marble table or on block of clay.
Honor to Hermes! The discerning god
Holds dearer than rich altars or great shrines
Pure hands that slay a victim without spot.
Friend, let us raise a mound on thy field's edge;
A he-goat's hairy throat shall pour its blood
Upon the purple turf and blackened clay.

THE DEAD GIRL.

Pass quickly, Living One, whoe'er thou art,
By this green mound where I lie unconsoled;
Tread not the flowers of my lowly tomb,
Where I hear creep the ivy and the ant.
Thou stay'st thy steps? A wood-dove's note has moaned.
No, let her not be slain above my bed.
If thou wouldst have my love, leave her to fly;
Life is so sweet! O, let her live, my friend!
Know'st thou? The myrtle garlanded my door;
A wedded maid, at Hymen's threshold I
Met Death, so near, so far from him I loved!
My eyelids closing to the happy light,
Now I must live for aye with Erebus,
A god unmoved by prayers, and shadowy Night.

REGILLA.

HERE buried Annia Regilla lies,
Through Ganymede Aphrodite's child,
Aeneas' daughter, whom great Herod loved,
So happy, young, and fair. Pity her, dead.
The Shade, whose body of delight lies here,
Is with that Lower Prince of Happy Isles,
And counts the days, the months, the year, so long!
Since Fate has exiled her so far from home.
Haunted by memories of her charming form,
Her spouse despairs, alone, in sleepless grief
On bed of purple, ivory and gold.
He tarries. He comes not. Her loving soul
Awaits him eagerly, and ever flies
Round the black scepter Rhadamanthus lifts.

THE RUNNER.

On a Statue by Myron.

As when, with Thymos close behind, he flew
Down Delphi's stadium by the shouting crowd,
So Ladas ever runs, with foot of bronze
Spurning the pedestal, slight, swift as the wind.
With arm stretched forth, eye fixed, and breast thrust out,
The pearling sweat of bronze drips from his brow.
You would say, the athlete from the mould had sprung
Alive, while yet the sculptor wrought his form.
He throbs, all tremulous with feverish hope,
With panting sides scarce breathes the air he cleaves;
With labor every bronzen muscle swells.
Rushing in his resistless course, see how
He springs this instant from this footing toward
The arena's palm-branch, beckoning at the goal!

THE CHARIOTEER.

THAT man who mounts the golden chariot-pole,
His black steeds' fourfold reins held in one hand
And in the other his good whip of ash,
Drives better, Stranger, than e'er Castor did.
Of famous house, himself more famous still, —
He's off! Toward the red turning-post he swings,
This Libyan, whom the Autocrat holds dear,
His rivals strown like seed upon the sand.
The dazzled circus sees him seven times
Reel whirling onward to the victor's goal,
All calm. Hail, son of Calchas, the Blue! Hail!
And you shall see, if eyes of mortals can,
A man made god, for Victory guides down
Her car of flame to greet Porphyrius.

ON OTHRYS.

To Puvis de Chavannes.

The air grows cool. The sun glides down the west;
The ox dreads fly and beetle now no more.
On Othrys' slopes the shadows lengthen; stay,
Stay here with me, dear guest the Gods have sent!
And while thou drink'st the foaming milk, thine eyes
Shall see from my poor hut Olympus' heights,
And far Tymphrestus' snows beyond the plains
And glorious hills of fertile Thessaly.
Yonder the sea,—Euboea,—red in the dusk,
Callidromus,—Oeta, which Hercules
Made his first altar, and his funeral pyre;
And last, in gauzy light, Parnassus, where
At evening, weary with some deathless flight,
Comes Pegasus, to vanish with the dawn.

ROME
AND
THE BARBARIANS

FOR VIRGIL'S SHIP.

CLEAR Dioscuri, Helen's brethren twain,
Let your stars, brighter, better keep from harm
The Latin poet, who would fain behold
'Neath Grecian skies the golden Cyclades
Rise from the deep. Of winds the tenderest,
Let mild Iapyx with redoubled breath
Of fragrant breezes fill the swelling sail,
And waft the good ship to the foreign shore.
Guide happily the Mantuan singer through
The island-sea in which the dolphin sports;
Lend him a brother's light, Son of the Swan!
Half of my life is in the fragile ship,
Which bears o'er seas that heard Arion sing
Great Virgil to the home-land of the Gods.

THE COUNTRY HOME.

YES, 'tis the old man Gallus owns the place
You see up yonder on the Alpine slope;
A single pine-tree shelters all the house
Of scarce one story with its roof of thatch,
Yet large enough to share with some loved guest.
He has his vines, and oven for two loaves;
And in his garden lupine grows to spare.
'Tis little? Gallus has no wish for more.
His grove yields fagots for the winter's fire,
And, in the summer, shade 'neath its green leaves;
There in the fall a stray thrush he may snare.
Contented with his narrow destiny,
Here Gallus ends his life where he was born,
For Gallus is a wise man. Fare you well!

THE FLUTE.

YONDER the doves fly through the evening air.
Nothing avails to charm love's feverish heat,
O Goatherd, like the note of pipe at lip,
While, near, the cool spring sounds among the reeds.
Beneath this plane-tree's shade where we are stretched
The grass is softer. Leave then, friend, the goat,
Who strays, deaf to her bleating, half-weaned kid,
To climb the rock and nip the tender buds.
My flute of seven parts of hemlock wood
Unequaled, joined with wax, sounds shrill or low,
And weeps, or sings, or moans, as I may choose.
Come learn of us Silenus' art divine,
And from this sacred pipe your loving sighs
Shall fly away in breathing harmonies.

TO SEXTIUS.

The boat is off the sands. The sky is clear;
The orchards bloom. No longer silvery frost
Gleams on the meadows in the morning sun.
The herdsman and his cattle leave the sheds.
All things revive; but Death and his sad tales
Oppress us; and, for thee, that day alone
Is sure, when at the festive board the dice
Shall no more mark thee for the table's king.
Short is our life, O Sextius! Let us haste
To live. Our knees are weakened now with age.
No spring-time comes in that cold land of shades.
Come, then. The woods are green; this is the time
To sacrifice to Faunus, in the gloom
Withdrawn, a black he-goat or white-fleeced lamb.

HORTORUM DEUS

To Paul Arène

I.

Olim truncus eram ficulnus.

HORACE.

APPROACH not! Go away! Pass by far off,
Stranger! Sly pilferer, thou wouldst steal, I think,
The grapes, the olives, or the aubergines
This orchard shelters, ripening in the sun.
I watch. A shepherd with a bill-hook hewed
Me out of Aeginetan fig-wood, tough:
Laugh at the sculptor, passer-by, but think
Of whence I am, and vengeance may be harsh.
Once, dear to the sailors, at a galley's prow
I stood, all colored red, and joyed to see
The water's foaming rage or dazzling play;
But now, mere guard of salad-herbs and fruit,
I ward off thieves from this enclosure here, —
Never to see the laughing Cyclades.

II.

Hujus nam domini colunt me Deumque salutant.

CATULLUS.

RESPECT, O Traveler, as thou fear'st my wrath,
This lowly roof of plaited reeds and flag;
Here with his children lives a strong old man,
The owner of this land and that clear spring.
'Tis he who set up in the threshing floor
My emblem, hewn four-square from linden-wood.
He has no other Gods; I guard alone
This orchard, planted too with flowers for me.
They are poor people, rustic and devout;
By them these violets, dull poppies, and
Green barley-heads were wound about my shaft;
And always twice each year this altar drinks
Beneath the sacrificing farmer's knife
The blood of a young, wanton, bearded goat.

III.

Ecce villicus
Venit . . .

CATULLUS.

HALLO, there, cursed children! Pitfalls! Traps!
The dog! I guard this place; you shall not come
Pretending it is for a clove of leek,
And then steal fruit and strip my grape-vines clean.
Besides, that farmer cutting stubble sees;
And if he comes, then, by my stake! your back
Will know how much a god of tough wood weighs
When handled by a strong man, striking hard.
Quick! Take the left-hand path, and follow it
To where the hedge leaves off, where that beech grows;
And there,—mind what I whisper to you now!—
The next farm's God Priapus does not watch;
From here you see the posts of trellises,
Where, shaded by the vines, the red grapes hang.

IV.

Mihi corolla picta vere ponitur.

CATULLUS.

COME in! Fresh-coated are my posts, and new
My arbor, where the sun comes gliding in;
Here's pleasant shade, sweet with the scent of balm;
Now April strews fresh flowers o'er the earth.
Each season decks me in its turn; ripe grain,
And grapes, green olives, or the Spring's first blooms.
The morning's milk still curdles in the vat,
When too the goat brings me her udder full.
This farmer honors me. I merit it;
Nor thrush nor thief e'er pilfered vine of his;
No man of the Roman Field is better served.
His sons are goodly, his wife too; and he
Each market-evening jingles in his hand
The pennies of bright silver brought from Rome.

V.

Rigetque dura barba juncta crystallo.

Diversorum poetarum lusus.

How cold! The last green vine-leaves shine with frost.
I am watching for the sunrise, for I know
The moment when Soracte's snows shall blush.
Hard lot of rustic God! Man is perverse.
With shaggy, matted beard I have shivered now
Some score of winters in this ruined yard.
My bright red paint scales off; my shrinking wood
Shows cracks; I fear to be worm-eaten yet.
Why not a household God, or some plain Lar,
In-doors and painted, ever happy, fed,
Yes, gorged with fruit and honey, wreathed with flowers?
In the entrance-court 'mid ancestors of wax
I'd age, and children on their manhood-day
Should hang their bullae on my honored neck.

THE TEPIDARIUM.

The myrrh perfumes their limbs relaxed, as they
Now dreamily enjoy December's warmth;
The bronzen brazier lights the room, and casts
A gleam, or shade, across their fair, pale brows.
On byssus cushion or in purple couch
Sunk softly, now a pink or amber form
Will rise a little, bend, or stretch itself
And raise the linen in voluptuous folds.
An Asian woman, on whose hot flesh glide
The trickling drops, turns wearily her arms,
All nerveless, in the middle of the room;
The pale group of Ausonia's daughters gaze
In ecstasy on that wild wealth of hair,
Black, bending with her body's hue of bronze.

TRANQUILLUS.

C. Plinii Secundi Epist. Lib. I, Ep. XXIV.

'Twas in this pleasant land Suetonius lived:
Amid the vines still stands a piece of wall
Of his poor villa by the Tiber's side,
A ruined arch, draped by the hanging vine.
'Twas here he loved to come each autumn, far
From Rome, and 'neath the last blue, cloudless skies
Gather his grapes, that, ripe, weighed down the elms.
His days passed here in an unchanging calm.
This peace, so pastoral, was haunted then
By Nero, Claudius, Caligula;
Here Messalina prowled in purple stole.
'Twas here his iron stylus, pointed sharp,
Scratched on the waxen tables merciless
How Capri's old man smirched his idle days.

LUPERCUS.

M. Val. Martialis Lib. I, Epigr. CXVIII.

LUPERCUS, from as far as he can see,
Cries: "Poet, your new epigram is prime.
Say, shall I send to you tomorrow for
The loan of all the rolls of all your works?"
"No, your old slave is lame and short of breath;
My stairs are hard, my house far off. Don't you
Live near the Palatine? My bookseller,
Atrectus dwells in the Argiletum, and—
His shop, The Forum Corner, has for sale
Dead authors' books,—and live ones'; Virgil 's there,
Terence and Phaedrus, Pliny, Silius.
There on a shelf, not on the farthest back,
Polished, and wrapped in purple,—cedar box,—
Martial 's for sale; price: five denarii."

THE TREBBIA.

The mountain-tops are whitening in the dawn
This fated day. The camp awakes. Below
The stream rolls roaring, where Numidians drink,
And everywhere sounds the clear trumpet's call.
In scorn of Scipio, of augurs false,
Of Trebbia overflowing, wind and rain,
Sempronius, Consul, haughty with new fame,
Has sent the lictors forth with lifted axe.
On the black sky, from the horizon flared
The sad glow of Insubrian villages
In flames. Far off an elephant was heard;
And yonder by the bridge against an arch
Stood Hannibal, triumphant in his thought,
And listened to the legions' heavy tread.

AFTER CANNÆ.

One consul slain, toward Linternum or
Venusia flees the other. Aufidus
O'erflows, too full of the dead and arms. The bolt
Strikes the Capitoline. Bronze sweats. Red skies
Grow dull. In vain the pontiff's lectistern;
Twice sought in vain the sibyl's oracle.
The grandsire's, widow's, orphan's common grief
Fills terror-stricken Rome with one long sob.
At night all crowded to the aqueducts,
Youth and decrepit age, plebs, women, slaves,
And all Suburra and the jails belch forth;
All dread to see on those red Sabine hills,
Where shines Heaven's bloody eye, the one-eyed Chief
Come riding his Getulian elephant.

TO ONE CELEBRATING HIS TRIUMPH.

Illustrious Imperator, let them carve
Upon thine arch barbarian warrior ranks,
Old chiefs beneath the yoke, armor and ships,
The captive fleet, the aplustre and the prow.
From whomsoever sprung, Ancus or boor,
Thy name, stock, honors, titles long or short,
Grave them in low relief and in the frieze,
But—deep, deep, lest the future frustrate all.
E'en now Time wields the fatal arm. Canst thou
Hope to eternise thy renown, when power
To cleave a trophy lives in one poor vine?
Alone thy triumph's marble, strown, shall show
Where lies thy ruined glory, choked by weeds,
And serve to dull some Samnite mower's scythe.

ANTONY
AND
CLEOPATRA

THE CYDNUS.

BENEATH triumphal blue, in sun-glare, moves
The silver trireme, whitening the dark stream,
And leaves a censer's perfume after it,
And notes of flutes, and sounds of rustling silk.
A wide-winged hawk is at the dazzling prow;
And from her royal dais, gazing, leans
In the evening splendor Cleopatra, like
Some golden bird, watching its distant prey.
In Tarsus waits her warrior, disarmed;
In air entranced the Lagian holds out
Her amber arms, pink in the light thrown down
From purple. She sees not her fate foretold
Beside her, — children twain, divine Desire
And Death, who strow rose-leaves on the dull tide.

THE EVENING AFTER THE BATTLE.

HARD was the shock of battle. Rallying now
The cohorts, tribunes and centurions
Breathed still, in air in which strong voices rang,
The acrid odors of the slaughter's heat.
With mournful gaze counting their comrades dead,
The soldiers watched far off, like fallen leaves
The bowmen of Phraortes whirl away;
And down their sunburnt faces rolled the sweat.
'Twas then appeared, all stuck with arrows, red
With tide that flowed from fresh wounds underneath
The floating purple and the ruddy bronze,
With tumult of the blaring trumpeters,
Curbing his frightened steed, 'gainst flaming skies,
Superb, the Imperator's bleeding form.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

From the high terrace both were looking down
On Egypt sleeping 'neath the stifling sky,
And Nile, who cleaves the Delta black, and sends
Toward Sais and Bubastis his rich flood.
The Roman felt his heavy corselet yield,
—A captive soldier set to soothe a child—
Beneath the form voluptuous, now clasped,
Pliant and faint, to his triumphant breast.
Her face amid her dark locks, seeming-pale,
She turns to him, whom matchless perfumes chain
Entranced, and holds her lips and her bright eyes.
The ardent Imperator, bending, sees
In those great starry orbs, glinting like gold,
A whole wide sea, and galleys there in flight.

EPIGRAPHIC SONNETS

Bagnères-de-Luchon, Sept. 188–.

THE VOW.

ILIXONI
DEO
FAB. FESTA
V. S. L. M.

ISCITTO DEO
HUNNU
VLOHOXIS
FIL.
V. S. L. M.

IBERIAN dark and Gaul of tawny hair,
Garumnian brown, ochre-and-carmine stained,
On votive marble that their hands have carved,
Have told this goodly water's saving power.
Then Imperators, 'neath Venasque drear,
Built the piscina and the Roman baths;
And by this roadside Fabia Festa found
The vervain and the mallow for the Gods.
Today, the springs sing me their song, divine
As when Iscittus and Ilixo reigned;
The sulphur still clouds the moraine's pure air:
So, in my verse vow-keeping, now I rear
As once did Hunnu, son of Ulohox,
A stranger's altar to the Nymphs below.

THE SPRING.

NYMPHIS AVG. SACRVM

'NEATH thorn and weed the buried altar lies.
The nameless spring goes dripping, dripping, still,
A plaintive sound within the lonely dell;
The Nymph, forgotten, weeps forever here.
The useless mirror lies unrippled now,
Its surface rarely skimmed by flying bird;
Alone the moon will look from topmost sky
To see her pale face there reflected still.
A wandering shepherd drinks at it sometimes;
And on the ancient paving of the road
Pours water, left in the hollow of his hand;
The ancient motion all unknown he makes,
For his eyes never saw the Roman shaft
With libatory vase and patera.

THE BEECH GOD.

FAGO DEO

He built beside Garumna his rude house
Beneath a beech of mighty, torse-like trunk,
Its white bark swollen with a God's own sap;
His sole horizon the maternal wood.
For here the free man finds in their due time
Beechnuts and wood, shade and the beasts to hunt
With bow or spear, with net or luring bait,
That he may eat their flesh or wear their skins.
Long he lived, rich, happy, and masterless;
When he came home at nightfall the old beech
Would hold out welcome with familiar arms;
And when Death came to bow this free man's head,
His sons' sons hewed his coffin from the heart
That had not known decay, of its chief branch.

TO THE DIVINE MOUNTAINS.

GEMINVS SERVVS
ET PRO SVIS CONSERVIS

Blue glaciers, peaks of marble and of slate,
Granite, moraines, whose winds rage from Néthou
To Bègle, wrest, burn, tear up wheat and rye;
Rough passes; lakes; dense, thickly nested woods;
Dull caves, black valleys where exiles of old,
Rather than bow beneath a servile rod,
With bear and wolf, chamois and eagle lived;
Ye cliffs and torrents, chasms, blest be ye all!
Fled from harsh town and slave-jail, Geminus
Did dedicate this shaft unto the Heights,
The sacred guardians of stern Liberty.
Striking the quivering silence of these peaks,
In air inviolate, unbounded, pure,
The cry of a free man I seem to hear.

MONTIBVS . . .
GARRI DEO . . .
SABINVLA .
V. S. L. M.

To this wild valley Cæsar exiled thee;
Each evening with slow steps toward Ardiège
Thou cam'st to rest upon that mossy rock,
Thy bent brow silvered with too early snows.
Thou saw'st thy youth again, thy dear loved home,
The Flamen red and his white train; and then,
To ease thy longing for the Latin soil,
Thy gaze sought heaven, sad Sabinula.
When, late, the eagle soared to aeries, high
On Gar, bright with its seven chalky peaks,
Thy daily dreams went with them in their flight.
Without desire, nor hoping aught from man,
Thy hands reared altars to the kindly Heights,
Whose nearer Gods consoled thee for thy Rome.

THE MIDDLE AGES
AND
THE RENAISSANCE

STAINED GLASS.

THESE panes have seen great dames and mighty lords
In flaming gleam of azure, gold, and pearl
Bow low the pride of helmet and of hood
Beneath the august consecrating hand,
When they would go at horn or bugle call
With saker or gerfalcon, or drawn sword,
To plain or wood, Byzantium or Saint John,
To fly the heron, or to Holy Land.
Now lords and ladies side by side lie here
With pointed shoe upon the outstretched hound,
On field of marble pavement, black and white.
Voiceless and motionless, and hearing not,
Their eyes of stone look up, but can not see
The great rose-window, ever blooming there.

EPIPHANY.

BALTHASAR, Melchior, Gaspar, the Three Kings,
With train of camels filing far behind
Laden with silver nefs, enamels, plate,
Advance as on the ancient painted page.
From the Far East they bring their gifts to lay
Before God's Son, now born to cure the ills
Which man and animal have suffered here;
A swarthy page holds up the figured robe.
Saint Joseph watches at the stable door;
And lowly at His feet they lay their crowns
In homage to the Child, who wondering smiles.
Augustus Cæsar reigned when first they came
With gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh,
Balthasar, Melchior, Gaspar, the Three Kings.

THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH.

Over his bench the master-carpenter
Would work since dawn at finishing the press,
Using, as need was, grating rasp, or plane,
Or mortise-chisel, or hard polisher.
So when toward evening, not without content
He saw the platane's shadow reach the sill,
The Lady Virgin and Saint Anne would come
With my Lord Jesus, and sit down by him.
Today the air is burning; no leaf stirs;
Saint Joseph's tired hand lays down the gouge
And with his apron-corner wipes his brow;
But in the dark rear of the workshop still
Shavings of gold keep following the plane
Of the Divine Apprentice, veiled in light.

MEDALLION.

Rimini's Lord, God's Vicar, Podestà.
His hawk-profile here stands out, there recedes,
In tawny half-light on the disk of bronze,
Life-like as when Matteo moulded it.
Now, of all tyrants, hated by a folk,
Count, marquis, duke, prince, princeling, lorded none, —
Be it Ezzelino, Galeazzo, Can,
Or Hercules, —with Malatesta's pride.
This best one, Sigismond Pandolfo, bled
Romagna and the Marches and the Gulf;
Then built a temple, made love, sang of it.
Their wives, too, were severe; for on the bronze,
On which Isotta smiles, the Elephant
Triumphal treads the primroses to earth.

THE RAPIER.

Upon the hilt you read: Calixtus, Pope.
Wrought in reliefs of gorgeous workmanship,
Tiara, keys, with boat and net composed
The ancestral Ox, emblazoned on the chape.
The handle is some laughing pagan god,
Or faun, clasped by a vine of coral beads;
And so the enamel sets the metal off,
It seems more made to dazzle than to strike.
Antonio Perez de Las Cellas forged
This pastoral staff for the first Borgia,
As if he had foreknown the famous race.
This sword sums more than Ariosto could,
Or Sannazaro, by its steel and gold,
Pope Alexander's and Prince Cæsar's deeds.

As you came forth from church, and piously
Stretched out your noble hand in charity,
Your beauty shone so clear in that dark porch,
The dazzled poor saw all the gold of heaven.
With gracious salutation greeting you,
Lowly, as fits him who would not offend,
I saw you draw your cloak, and, seeming vexed,
Turn from me, as you covered up your eyes.
But Love, who sways the most rebellious heart,
Would not that you, less kind than beautiful,
The fount of pity, should refuse me grace;
And you were then so slow to draw your veil,
Your shining lashes quivered as they drooped,
Like leaves at night when one bright star shines through

ON "LE LIVRE DES AMOURS" OF PIERRE DE RONSARD.

More than one lover carved of old in bark
More than one name in gardens of Bourgueil;
Beneath the Louvre's golden ceilings more
Than one heart thrilled with pride at one quick smile.
What matters it? Their joy or grief untold,
They lie all there, hemmed by four planks of oak;
Beneath the grass that covers them, no man
Claims from oblivion their lifeless dust.
All die. Marie, Hélène, Cassandra proud,
Your fair forms were but senseless ashes now,
—To rose and lily no tomorrow comes—
If, by the Seine or golden Loire, Ronsard
Had not with deathless hand entwined for you
Fame's laurel in the myrtle crown of Love.

THE BEAUTIFUL VIOLE.

To Henry Cros.

A vous, trouppe légère,
Qui d'aile passagère
Par le monde volez . . .
JOACHIM DU BELLAY.

UPON her balcony, she sees the road
Men take from Loire-banks to the Italian shores.
O'er her bent brow the olive leaves are pale;
The violet in bloom shall fade this night.
The viol, still caressed by her frail hand,
Charms by its music her sad loneliness,
While her thoughts fly to one forgetting her,
Who treads the dust 'neath which lives Roman pride.
Of her, his 'gentle Angevin,' the soul
Divine would hover o'er the trembling strings,
When her love's anguish clenched her troubled heart;
Her voice gives to the winds, which bear it far
And soothe, it may be, even him untrue,
The song he made for one who winnows grain.

EPITAPH.

After the verses of Henry III.

'Tis here, O passer-by, lies Hyacinthe,
Who was in life the Lord of Maugiron;
He died, —God take him to Himself, forgiven!—
On honor's field, and lies in holy earth.
Not even Quélus better carried off
The cap with pearls and plume, the plaited ruff.
So, here you see where a new Myron carved
A sprig of hyacinth on this death-stone.
They dressed his hair, and Henry, kissing him
Enshrouded, had them bear to Saint-Germain
His fair form, now, alas! inert and pale;
And eager that such mourning last for aye,
He had set up this emblem in the church,
In loving token of Apollo's grief.

IN VELLUM, GILT.

The pattern, Master-Binder, that you worked
In gold on this book's back and edges, lacks
The brilliancy with which it gleamed at first,
However bold the hand that pushed the tool.
The ciphers, delicately interlaced,
Each day grow fainter on the fine, white skin;
My eyes can scarcely trace the ivy vine,
Which winds upon the covers, in and out.
This supple, nigh transparent ivory
Perchance has felt the fond, caressing touch
Marie, Diane, or Marguerite once gave;
For this pale vellum, gilt by Clovis Ève,
Calls up by some old charm, I know not how,
The soul of perfumes old and shadowy dreams.

THE DOGARESSA.

BENEATH these marble porticoes great Lords,
Whom Titian painted, greet, and speak, and pass;
Their massive collars, gold of ancient stamp,
Set off the splendor of red robes of state.
With eyes that glow with their patrician pride
They watch the immemorial lagoons,
Those sparkling depths of Adriatic blue,
Beneath the bright Venetian canopy.
And while the brilliant throng of Cavaliers
In purple and in gold crowd the white stairs,
The tender air one flooding haze of blue,
Aloof, a Lady indolent, superb,
Half turning in the sea of her brocade,
Smiles on the negro boy who bears her train.

PONTE VECCHIO.

Antonio di Sandro, Goldsmith.

SINCE matins the good Master-Goldsmith worked
With tongs from which the enamel dripped, to spread
The Latin mottoes like a flower o'er
A pax, nielloed, or a clasp of gold.
Upon the Bridge, to sound of silvery bells,
Crowded together frock, camail, and cape;
And through a sky like deep-stained glass, the sun
Haloed the brows of the fair Florentines.
While quick to feel the charm of ardent dreams
The work-boys, pensive, would forget to clasp
The hands of the betrothed upon the ring,
With graver tempered like a poniard's steel,
The young Cellini, seeing naught else, cut
The Titans' combat on a dagger-hilt.

THE OLD GOLDSMITH.

Better than any Master in our book,
Ruiz or Arphé, Ximenez, Becerill,
Ruby and pearl and beryl have I set,
Shaped the vase-handle, hammered out the frieze;
At peril of my soul, painted or cut
In silver, or enamel iris-hued,
Instead of crucifix or saint, — O shame! —
Bacchuses drunken, Danaës surprised.
More than one rapier-blade I've damascened;
And for my vain pride in these works of Hell,
Have staked my share in the Eternal Life:
And now the evening of my age comes on,
Like Fray Juan of Segovia I would die
With a gold monstrance as my work in hand.

THE SWORD.

Trust me, good child, follow the ancient way:
A sword with cross-guards straight and branch-wound hilt,
Clenched by a man of spirit and of power
Proves lighter burden than Rome's ritual.
Here! This gold Hercules, warm in your grasp,
Grew polished in your own forefathers' hands:
'Neath the bright surface all the prouder swell
The iron muscles of the Demigod.
Brandish it, and the flexile steel will shower
Clusters of sparks! 'Tis firm, and such a blade
As makes a proud man's heart to thrill with joy!
For in the hollow of its brilliant gorge,
As noble Dame a gem, it bears the stamp
Of Julian del Rey, Prince of the Forge.

TO CLAUDIUS POPELIN.

On fragile glass held in its frame of lead
The old-time masters painted high-born lords,
And burghers, bowing humble knees in prayer,
Their hoods a-turning with their pious hands;
While on the breviary's yellowed page
Another's art would show 'mid flowers the Saints,
Or shape the quick and supple forms that glow
In the swelling ewer's arabesques of gold.
Today their son and rival, Claudius,
Like some sublime artificer revived,
To solid metal weds his genius; so
Will I, beneath the enamel of my rhyme,
Set the green garland on his glorious brow,
The hero's laurel, for the time to come.

ENAMEL.

The kiln and plaque are ready. Take thy lamp:
Shape now the fiery, iris-hued paillon,
And on the sombre pigment fix with fire
The sparkling dust in which thy pencil dips.
With myrtle or with laurel wilt thou gird
Some thinker's, hero's, prince's, lover's brow?
What God shall make the scaly hydra rear,
Or sea-green hippocamp, beneath black sky?
Nay; rather draw in sapphire some proud face,
Some warlike Maid of Ophir, Bradamant,
Penthesilea's, Aude's, Thalestris' head;
And make her beauty still more terrible
With winged dragon-helmet o'er fair locks,
And swelling golden gorgon at her breast.

DREAMS OF ENAMEL.

TONIGHT the room is dark, the furnace roars;
The great fire, prisoned in the glowing bricks,
Grows hotter still; its breath of magic makes
The copper 'neath the enamel more than gold;
And from my pencils rise, live, run, take flight
The monstrous mythologic folk: the Sphinx,
Centaurs, Chimæra, Pan, the Orgy's train,
The Gorgon's race, Chrysaor, Pegasus.
Shall I paint Orpheus open-armed to Her,
The Gate of Hell, the hinge unyielding, or
Penthesilea and Achilles' tears?
Or Hercules and prostrate Cerberus,
Or the Maid writhing at the cavern's mouth
And Dragons scenting at her anguished form?

THE CONQUERORS

THE CONQUERORS.

As gerfalcons who leave their native prey,
Captains and men from Palos of Moguer,
Weary of bearing their proud misery,
Set forth, drunk with heroic, brutal dreams.
They go to conquest of the fabled gold
Cipango ripens in its far-off mines;
The trade-winds strain the sloping yards; they sail
To shores of wonder in the western world.
An epic morrow is each evening's hope.
The tropics' phosphorescent sea of blue
Enskies their dreams with a mirage of gold;
Or from the bow of the white caravel
They watch and see from out the ocean depths
New stars come up and glow in unknown skies.

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.

JUAN Ponce de Leon, by Satan tried,
Already full of years and ancient lore
And seeing age turn white his short, coarse hair,
Took to the sea to find the Springs of Health.
Upon his good "Armada" three years long,
Haunted by dreams, he searched the sea-green waste,
Until at last from out Bermudan fogs
Loomed Florida beneath enchanted skies.
Blessing his madness then, the Conqueror
Planted his standard with his feeble hands
In that bright land, that offered him a tomb.
Happy old man! Thy fortune such that Death
Despite thee made thy dream more beautiful,
For glory gave thee an immortal youth.

THE CONQUEROR'S TOMB.

BENEATH no flowering catalpa's shade,
Nor where white petals star black tulip-trees,
Not in that fateful earth found he his rest:
The conquered Florida checked not his march.
A common tomb was not for such a death;
Shroud of the Conqueror of Western Ind,
The Mississippi's self enfolded him;
No Redskin nor grey bear shall vex him more.
The virgin waters hollowed his deep couch;
What needs there candle, psalm, to lie in state,
The votive offering, the monument?
Does not the North-Wind through the cypresses
Come weeping, singing an eternal prayer
Above the Great Stream where De Soto lies?

CAROLO QUINTO IMPERANTE.

Let him be reckoned with the glorious dead.
His arm it was that steered the first ship through
The clustered island Gardens of the Queen,
Where perfumes load the ever-breathing winds.
More than the years, the waves, or stinging spray,
The fiery calms of those still seas, and too
His love and fear of fabled siren charms
Have made his brown locks white and white his beard.
Castile has triumphed by this man; her fleets
By him have stretched the matchless empire's bounds
Until on them the sun should never set.
His name, Bartolomé Ruiz, the prince
Of pilots; and his arms, the royal shield
Enriched with anchor, black, and cable gold.

THE ANCESTOR.

To Claudius Popelin.

Glory has furrowed with illustrious lines
The fearless face of this great Cavalier;
Upon a never humbled brow is burned
The weathered tan of war and torrid suns.
On islands, main-land, dry sierras, all,
He set the Cross, his fluttering pennon known
From towering Andes to that stormy Gulf,
Whose waters whiten the Floridian shores.
His latest born descendants, Claudius,
See his proud melancholy live again
In thy bronze armor and resplendent lines;
His sombre eyes seem still to see in the heaven
Of thine enamel's clear, metallic sheen
The ancient glory of Castile of Gold.

TO THE FOUNDER OF A CITY. I.

Thy weary hands, not clutching Ophir yet,
Brought here and set the royal standard up,
And founded on this bay's enchanted sweep
Another Carthage in a land of dreams.
Thou deemedst that thy name should never die;
For hadst thou not cemented it for aye
In the very blood and stone that made thy walls?
But, Soldier, thy fond hope was built on sand.
For Carthagena, stifling 'neath her sky,
From her black palaces beholds thy wall
Fall crumbling in the shore-devouring sea:
Yet on thy crest, O Conqueror, still glows,
Heraldic witness to thy splendid dreams,
A city, argent, and a palm-tree, or.

TO THE FOUNDER OF A CITY. II.

Though Incas, Aztecs, Yaquis, Andes, woods,
Pampas and river were their conquest, yet
They left as sole bequest in proof a name,
A title vain of marquis or of count;
But thou, the glory of my race, didst found
Another Carthage by the Carib sea,
And win to the Cross all the red lands that stretch
From Magdalena e'en to Darien's stream.
Upon her island where the Ocean breaks,
Despite the ages, man, lightning, and winds,
Thy city stands with fort and convent still.
Thy children boast no trefoil, ache, nor pearl;
A city, argent, is upon their shield,
Beneath a shading palm-tree's branches, or.

TO A DEAD CITY.

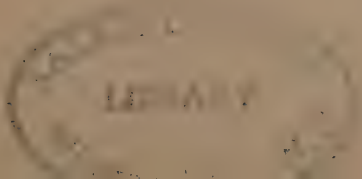
Cartagena de Indias.
1532-1583-1697.

THOU gloomy City, once the Ocean's Queen!
Where the gigantic galleons would ride,
The shark pursues the scombers undisturbed;
The straying cloud alone makes shadows there.
Since Drake and English miscreants battered thee,
Thy crumbling walls are but black, ruined heaps,
And show, like glorious necklace of dark pearls,
The yawning paths of Pointis' cannon-shot.
Beneath a burning sky, by white-flecked sea,
Thou dreamest in the dull noon's sleepy light,
O warrior City, of old conquerors;
And in thy passionless, calm tropic night,
Still fondly cherishing thine ancient fame,
Thou sleepest 'neath thy palm-trees tremulous.

THE ORIENT
AND
THE TROPICS

THE VISION OF KHEM. I.

Noon. The air burns. The light is terrible.
The river flows its languid, leaden course.
Down from the blinding zenith falls the glare,
And o'er all Egypt Phré broods, merciless.
The mighty sphinxes with ne'er-drooping lids,
Stretched on their sides bathed in the yellow sands,
Pursue with looks of endless mystery
The great stone needles' measureless uplift.
A sole, black spot in that serene, white sky
Far off, a flock of vultures, ever wheels;
The great flame soothes to sleep both men and beasts.
The hot earth crackles; and the God in bronze,
Anubis, stands amidst this joy of heat
All motionless, and, unheard, bays the sun.



THE VISION OF KHEM. II.

The round, resplendent moon shines on the Nile.
The ancient city of the dead is roused,
Where in the priestly pose each king had lain,
Wound with the fillet and the coated cloths.
Countless as in the days of Rameses,
A noiseless people forms the mystic train;
A multitude, absorbed in dreams of stone,
In lines deploys and marches in the night.
They leave their pictured walls, the Bari borne
Before them by the priests of Ammon-Ra,
The mighty God, the Guider of the Sun.
Ram-sphinxes, girt with the vermilion disk,
Awaken, startled from their age-long sleep,
And with one bound are springing to their feet.

THE VISION OF KHEM. III.

And still the crowd increases, numberless;
The sombre hypogaeum's lines of beds
Are empty, and the sacred hawks have left
The midst of the cartouches in new flight.
Beasts, peoples, kings, advance, the sparkling gold
Of the uraeus wound about fierce brows;
But thick bitumen seals their thin-lipped mouths.
First, the Great Gods: Hor, Knoum, Ptah, Hathor, Neith;
Then all those led by ibis-headed Thoth,
In shenti clad and crowned with pschent, adorned
With lotus blue. The wandering line winds on
In triumph by abhorrent ruined shrines;
The halls' cold pavements bright beneath the moon,
With weird, colossal shadows stretching far.

THE PRISONER.

To Gérôme.

The cries of the muezzins now have ceased.
Purple and gold fringe the green western sky;
The crocodile glides down to muddy rest;
The last sounds on the river die away.
With legs crossed, as a smoker at his ease,
The chief was dreaming, by the hashish soothed,
While on the rowers' seats the cangia's crew,
Two naked blacks, bent straining at the oars;
And at the stern, of merry, mocking tongue,
Scraping the guzla to some shrill, wild tune,
A base and fierce-eyed Arnaut leaned; for there
Lay bound and bleeding at his fetters' wounds,
An old Sheik, watching with a dull, grave look
The minarets upon the rippled Nile.

"It was a man with two swords."

ANSWERING her idle touch the biwa sounds,
When through the lattice-work of fine bamboo
She sees the conqueror of her dreams of love
Draw near across the dazzling, level strand.
'Tis he, with swords at side and fan held high,
Girdle of red and scarlet tassel, bright
On dark-hued armor. On his shoulder gleamed
Hizen's or Tokungawa's blazonry.
This glorious warrior, cased in plate and plaque,
In bronze and silk and brilliant lacquer, seemed
Some dark crustacean monster, ruddy scaled.
He sees her, smiles behind his bearded mask;
And, at his quickened step the sunlight gilds
The two antennæ quivering on his casque.

THE DAIMIO.

The morning of the battle.

WHEN at the black, four-tufted war-whip's touch
The martial stallion, neighing, rears, the swords
Ring clanking as they sweep the rider's sides,
His bronze cuirass against his skirt of mail.
The Chief, in lacquer, brass and crepon, takes
The hairy mask from his smooth face, and sees
Nippon's volcano white, against a sky
Of cinnabar, with snows where smiles the Dawn.
He saw in eastern skies all dashed with gold
The day-star's dazzling orb lift from the sea
Its glorious light on this disastrous morn:
To shield his eyes, whose lids moved not at all,
One gesture opened out the iron fan,
With red Sun rising on its satin's white.

Ages of Chaos passed, then ages more
Saw from this crater torrent flames thrown up,
And higher than the Chimborazos rose
The solitary mountain's plume of fire.
No sound awakens now the unechoing peak;
Where ashes rained the birds now quench their thirst;
The soil is motionless; the blood of Earth,
The lava, rigid grown, left her at rest.
Yet, supreme effort of the ancient fires,
Upon this very throat's edge, chilled for aye,
And bursting up through rocks now turned to dust,
Like peal of thunder on the silent air,
Mid dust of golden pollen darted forth,
The flower of the cactus blooms on fire.

CENTURY FLOWER.

Upon the powdered rock of this last slope
Where the volcanic tide had ceased to flow,
A seed, wind-borne to Gualatieri, sprouts,
And, clutching earth, spreads out, a tender plant.
It grows. From darkness, where its moist root sinks,
The stalk has drawn its draughts of hidden flame;
In sunlight of a century matured,
The massive bud now bends the flower-stalk.
Then, lending new fire to the burning air,
It bursts with giant pistil straight upheld,
And far the stamen darts the pollen's gold;
So the great aloe with the scarlet flower
Dreamed of a wedded love a hundred years
To bloom at last but for a single day.

THE sunlight 'neath the sea like some strange dawn
Enfolds the coral-trees of the abyss,
Whose deep, warm basins show commingled there
The animal a flower, the flower alive.
And all that salt or iodine has tinged,
Moss, hairy weed, urchins, anemones,
Spread the dull purple of their sumptuous forms
O'er coral-bottoms pale, with myriad pores.
With scales more splendid than the enamel's blaze,
A great fish swims across the branches, slow,
And indolent, through the transparent shades;
But suddenly he moves his fin of fire
An flashes through the dull, unmoving blue
The quivering gold and pearl and emerald.

NATURE AND DREAM

ANCIENT MEDAL.

STILL Ætna grows the golden purple wine
Erigone poured to Theocritus;
But such sweet charms as passed into his lines
The poet of today would seek in vain.
Lost is the pure, divine profile; in turn
Enslaved and fondled, Arethusa joins
To her vexed Grecian blood the burning rage
Of Saracen, and Angevin disdain.
Time passes. All die. Marble wears away.
A dream is Agrigentum. Syracuse
Sleeps 'neath the blue shroud of her kindly sky.
The metal hard, obedient to Love's hand,
Alone has kept in deathless, silvery bloom
The beauty of the maids of Sicily.

THE FUNERAL RITES.

When olden warriors went their downward way,
Then toward illustrious Phocis, to the shrines
O'erhung by rocky Pytho, lightning-girt,
Greece followed forth their outward forms divine.
While night shone on the radiant island-seas
And lonely bays, from some clear headland's height
Their shades would listen to the washing sea,
Which sang above their tombs on Salamis.
But I shall die, an old man, grieving long.
My body, nailed in narrow coffin, laid
In purchased earth by priest with taper-light;
And yet I dreamed to have the glorious fate
Of falling like my fathers in the day,
Still young, mourned by strong mens' and maidens' tears.

THE VINTAGE.

The tired vintagers have left their lines.
Clear voices ring out on the evening air;
The women walk together toward the press
And call and signal all amid their songs.
Such was the sky when white with flying swans,
On Naxos smoking like a censer red,
The revel saw the Cretan sit beside
The Vanquisher with vine-blood overcome.
No longer brandishing the thyrsus bright
Does Dionysus conquer beasts and Gods,
Nor bind the panthers with a yoke of flowers;
But Autumn, daughter of the Sun, still twines
The blood-stained vine-branch of the ancient rites
With locks of black and flowing hair of gold.

THE SIESTA.

No sound of insect or marauding bee:
Oppressed with heat all in the forest sleeps.
Through leafage dense sifts down such mild, soft light
As bathes the velvet of the emerald moss.
Resplendent, wandering Noon darts through the dome
A beam upon my half-closed, sleepy lids,
A rosy net of myriad furtive lines
Along, across, athwart the heated shade.
Then toward the fiery gauze, shot through with rays,
Flits the frail swarm of rich-hued butterflies,
As if with perfume of the sap and light
Made drunken; then my trembling fingers seize
Each thread, and in the fine-meshed net of gold,
Harmonious huntsman, I hold fast my dreams.

THE SEA OF BRITTANY

To Emmanuel Lansyer.

A PAINTER.

He knows the thoughtful eyes, the ancient race,
Which treads the hard soil of the Breton land,
The bare, waste land, pink, gray, monotonous,
With crumbling manors, ivy-clad, and yews.
From high slopes planted with the trembling beech,
At close of windy autumn days he views
The red sun sinking in the white-capped waves;
His lip has felt the salt spray from the reefs.
He paints the splendors of the vast, sad sea,
On which the clouds reflect their amethyst,
Its foam of emerald and its sapphire deeps.
He stays the instant's water, air and light,
And on his narrow canvas makes the sands
Repeat the glories of the western sky.

BRITTANY.

That merry blood may rule the spirit's gloom,
Let breath from the Atlantic fill thy lungs,
Loaded with perfume of the salt sea-weed;
Arvor bids thee to capes by white seas sprayed.
The furze is blooming now, the heather pink;
The land of ancient clans, of sprites and dwarfs,
Still keeps for thee, my friend, its granite hills,
Unchanging man among the changeless things.
Come see Arez in all her waste lands lift
To mournful skies her cypress undecayed,
Her Menhirs raised above the buried brave.
The sea that rocks in bed of golden weeds
Voluptuous Is and Occismor the Great
Shall soothe thy sad heart with its murmurings.

FLORIDUM MARE.

The harvest overflows the checkered plain,
Rolls, undulates, and breaks in swaying winds;
The harrow's profile 'gainst the distant sky
A pitching ship's with bowsprit black, high raised;
And at my feet the sea to the purple west
One growing meadow infinitely great,
Cerulean, violet, perse, pink, or white
With waves that die upon the ebbing tide.
The gulls that follow with the flowing sea
Scream joyously as they fly wheeling toward
The ripened grain, whose golden surges swell;
While from the land a honeyed breeze bears o'er
The flowery ocean swarms of butterflies,
Disporting in their winged wantonness.

SETTING SUN.

The brilliant furze, the granite's ornament,
Gilds the rough summit lighted by the west;
Far off, still gleaming with its line of foam,
The endless sea begins where ends the land.
Below me night and silence; nests are still;
All now at home, the cottage smoke ascends;
Alone the Angelus sounds through the mist,
Blending its note with the vast ocean-tones.
Then, as if from the depths of an abyss,
From trails, ravine, and moors come far-off calls
Of shepherds, leading home belated flocks.
The whole horizon sinks in shadow now,
For on the darkening sky the dying sun
Has closed the golden rays of his red fan.

MARIS STELLA.

In linen head-dress all with folded arms,
Clad in coarse woolen or in thin percale,
The women kneel upon the bare cove-rock,
And watch the ocean dashing white on Batz.
The men, sons, lovers, fathers, husbands, there
With those Paimpol, Audierne, Cancale had joined,
Had sailed on the far voyage to the north;
Bold fishermen, how many come not back!
Above the sounds of ocean and of shore
Rises the plaintive chant, invoking clear
The Holy Star, the imperilled sailor's hope;
And each tanned face is bowed as the Angelus
From Roscoff's belfries to far Sybiril's
Goes ringing, dying 'neath the paler sky.

THE BATH.

Such forms as were the Centaurs', man and beast
Are in the sea, unbridled, naked, free,
'Neath flaming skies amid the golden mist
Of the sharp spray,—a sculptor's sinewy group.
The untamed steed and rustic trainer both
Draw full their lungs in that salt-scented air,
And feel with joy the rough Atlantic dash
Its icy waters 'gainst their skin and mane.
The surges rise and rush on in a wall,
And break. He shouts. The neighing horse's tail
Strikes the blue water, splashing dazzlingly.
Rearing with hair wild-flying in the blue,
They thrust the black and steaming breast to meet
The thousand lashes of the fuming tide.

CELESTIAL BLAZONRY.

At times I have seen on heaven's azure field
The clouds of silver, purple, and of red
Paint the celestial window of the west
With one wide blazonry no eye could bear.
Supporters, crest, creatures of heraldry,
The leopard, unicorn, eglet, or snake,
Captive cloud-giants whom a gust would free,
With figures lifted high and arching breasts.
In those strange combats in the fields of space
When the black Seraphs with Archangels strove,
Some George or Michael, warrior of the skies,
Some mighty Prince of Heaven won this shield,
Like theirs by whom Constantinople fell,
A sun, gold besant, o'er a sea of green.

ARMOR.

As guide to Raz Trogor had furnished me
A hairy shepherd like some old Evhage;
And now we tread, breathing its fragrance wild,
That rugged Cymric land where grows the broom.
The west was reddening; we were walking on,
When suddenly I felt the briny blast;
And the man stood; and pointing with long arm
O'er the dull landscape, said: "Sell euz ar-mor!"
And I on tip-toe on the rosy heath,
Beheld the vast resplendent Ocean dash
Its green salt waves against the cape's dark rocks;
And there as the horizon's void still moved
To west in evening's light, my full heart knew
The fearless joy of winds and boundless space.

RISING TIDE.

PENMARC'H to Raz, the whole coast lies in mist;
The sun seems but a fixed, white beacon-light.
Alone the wandering gulls still breast the wind,
That brushes back their plumage as they fly.
With furious onset in succession due
The deep-green waves beneath their crests of foam
Come thundering to burst in scattered spray,
Like watery plumes above the dripping reefs.
And I too let the tides of my thought flow,
Dreams, hopes, regrets, of my expended strength,
That leave me only bitter memories.
The voice of Ocean is a brother's, for
The clamoring water's ever-lifted cry
Is man's to the Gods, in vain eternally.

SEA BREEZE.

The winter spares no flower of heath or yard.
Death everywhere; and gray is all the rock,
On which the Atlantic waves break ceaselessly.
The faded petal 'neath its pistil droops.
And yet a delicate aroma comes,
Borne landward on the wind, so softly breathed
It fills my heart with an unwonted joy.
From what land hast thou wandered, strange perfume?
I know it now, wafted three thousand leagues
From yonder shore where the Antilles blue
Faint 'neath the glowing of the western star:
And I, on this wave-beaten Cymric coast,
Have caught the fragrance of my native air
From flowers that bloom in far America.

THE CONCH.

In what cool seas, how many winters through, —
What man shall ever know, frail, pearly conch? —
Have rolling waves and currents and the tides
Been rocking thee in green abysmal depths?
Today, far from the salt and ebbing tide
Thy bed is yellow sands beneath the sky;
But vain thy hope! The great voice of the seas,
Long and despairing, groans within thee still.
A sounding prison has my soul become,
And as in thy recesses the long plaint
Of ancient murmurings still weeps and sighs,
So in its depths my heart, too full of Her,
Resounds with echoes of the far-off storm,
Dull, vague, and slow, and yet to last for aye.

THE BED.

WHETHER its hanging be brocade or serge,
Sad as a tomb or merry as a nest,
There man is born, there rests, and there unites,
Child, husband, in old age, married or maid.
With holy sprinkling wedded couch or Death's,
Beneath black crucifix or blessed branch,
There all commences, there all has its end,
From our first dawn to our last candle's flame.
Close, lowly, rustic, or with tester proud
Painted triumphally with red and gold,
Be it of maple, cypress, or rough oak;
Happy who sleeps without remorse or fear
In the ancestral, venerable bed,
Where his own kindred found their life and death!

THE EAGLE'S DEATH.

WHEN he has left below the eternal snows,
The eagle's mighty wings seek higher air,
A sunlight nearer in a brighter sky,
Kindling new splendors in his savage eyes;
Rising he breathes in floods of sparkling air,
And higher still he wings his proud, slow flight,
Drawn to the storm-cloud by the lightning's gleam,
When, with one flash, both pinions are struck through.
Screaming, swept onward by the whirling storm,
He drinks convulsively the air of flame,
And plunges to the abyss of crackling fire.
What fortune his, whom Fame or Freedom bids,
In pride of strength and boundless dream's desire,
To happiness of such brief, dazzling death!

PLUS ULTRA.

THOUGH men have conquered all the burning lands
Where lions, poisonous beasts, and reptiles roam,
And vexed the Ocean where the Nautilus
Sails the gold courses of old galleons,
Beyond the snow, beyond the maelstrom's gulf,
Beyond Spitzbergen's awful barrenness,
The sluggish polar sea still beats on isles,
Where never mariner has raised his flag.
Come with me! We will crush through pathless ice,
For I am weary in my strength to bear
The easy fame of conqueror of gold;
And I will go, will scale the farthest cape,
And seek some undiscovered silent sea
To win for pride one more caress of fame.

THE LIFE OF THE DEAD.

To the Poet Armand Silvestre.

WHEN Earth shall take us both unto itself,
And over us they set the sombre cross,
Thy body shall inform the lily's snow,
My flesh shall live within the sanguine rose.
The god-like Death thou saw'st in his black flight,
Shrouded in silence and oblivion,
Shall lull us gently as we move through Heaven
On our enchanted way to newer stars.
And rising to the sun, his fire of life
Shall take our blending spirits to its waves
And deathless happiness in its great flames;
While with the sacred name of poet-friends
Glory shall crown with her immortal fame
Our shades among the Brothers of the Lyre.

TO THE TRAGEDIAN E. ROSSI.

On hearing him render words of Dante.

I HAVE seen thee, Rossi, in thy black cloak sweep
To crush Ophelia's weak and suffering heart,
And like a maddened tiger in thy love
Stifle thy sobs in the dread handkerchief.
Thou wast Macbeth and Lear; I wept to see
Thee kiss, last lover of old Italy,
The pallid Juliet at the nuptial tomb;
But thou wast one night still more terrible.
For horror and excess of joy sublime
Were mine when first I heard the iron blasts
Of triple rhyme made golden by thy voice;
All lighted red by the infernal flame
I saw,—and trembled in my inmost soul—
The living Dante tell the tale of Hell.

MICHELANGELO.

What tragical unrest he felt, alone
Within the Sistine, far from feasting Rome,
Painting the Sibyls and the Prophets there
And the Last Judgment on the sombre wall!
He heard within him, weeping unconsoled,—
Chained to the heights, a Titan in desire,—
Country and Love, Glory and their defeats,
And saw that all things die, all dreams deceive.
For him these Giants writhe their heavy forms,
Mightily, wearily, in bloodless strength,
These Slaves held fast in the unyielding stone.
His proud soul in the marble seems to boil
When at his touch it feels the thrilling life,
Wrath of a God whom Matter overcomes.

ON A BROKEN STATUE.

The moss has closed the dull eyes piously,
For they would seek in vain in this wild wood
A maiden who should pour the wine and milk
Upon the fair-named land whose bounds he marked:
Viburnum, hop, and ivy wind today
About this ruined God, nor know if he
Were Pan, Silvanus, Hermes, or a Faun,
And wreathe his battered brow with their own green.
See how the slanting rays, caressing still,
Have in this flat-nosed face set two gold orbs!
There like two ruddy lips the wild vine laughs;
And, miracles of motion, murmuring winds,
Leaves, shifting shadow, and the moving sun
Of ruined marble make a living God!

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